

**STATEMENT OF ALLAN WARREN,
MARINE OPERATIONS MANAGER
NEW YORK WATERWAYS
INTERVIEW DATED NOVEMBER 21, 2000**

4 PAGES (INCLUDING COVER)



**National
Transportation
Safety Board**

Notes of Interview

Date: November 21, 2000

Place: New York Waterway Maintenance Facility
Port Imperial
Weehawken, New Jersey 07087-7142

Person Interviewed: Mr. Allan Warren
Marine Operations Manager
New York Waterways

Interview Conducted By: Donald J. Tyrrell,
Investigator-in-Charge
National Transportation Safety Board

INTRODUCTION

I interviewed Mr. Warren in conjunction with the NTSB investigation of the November 17, 2000, fire on board the U.S. Passenger Ferry *Port Imperial Manhattan*. The text that follows is not a verbatim record of my conversation with Mr. Warren. It has been developed from my handwritten notes of my conversation and is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

INTERVIEW

As a Marine Operations Manager for New York Waterways, Mr. Warren is responsible for the daily deployment of vessels, as well as ensuring that the vessels are properly manned and fueled. He provides expediting assistance for necessary vessel maintenance work and maintains communications with the vessels via VHF-FM radio and cellular telephone up to 2130 at night. Fourteen company ferries are outfitted with cellular telephone mounted in the pilothouse. He said that some vessel personnel carry their own personnel cellular telephones while on board the vessel for their own usage. In addition, the company has two VHF-FM "house channels," Channels 71 and 69 by which it maintains communications with the ferries.

According to Mr. Warren, it was his normal practice to contact each vessel every hour to check on "how things are going." On those nights when he works to 2100, he normally takes a ride after 6:00 pm on each of the 6 vessels operating out of Jersey City, Weehawken, and Lincoln Harbor. He said that the *Port Imperial Manhattan* was

the only New York Waterways ferry operating out of Lincoln Harbor.

Mr. Warren was on duty at Port Imperial ferry terminal when the fire broke out on board the *Port Imperial Manhattan*. He said, at 1902, he received a cellular telephone call from Felipe Gonzalez, a deckhand on board the *Manhattan* reporting that there was "smoke" on the vessel. He said that the cellular telephone call terminated before he could get any further details concerning the situation on board the *Manhattan*. Mr. Warren then contacted the New York Waterways Ferry George Washington, which was underway without any passengers on board, and requested that the master to go to the Manhattan to see what was "going on."

At 1908, Mr. Warren received a second telephone call from Mr. Gonzalez. During this call, Mr. Gonzalez described flames on the vessel. Mr. Warren said that he also recalls hearing something about a "man in the water." Hearing "flames" and "man in the water," Mr. Warren broadcast a message to all company vessels over VHF-FM channel 69 to the effect that, "We have a boat in trouble" and that all vessels should proceed to the area to render assistance.

About this time, Mr. Warren received a call from the master of the New York Waterways Ferry Theodore Roosevelt who asked if he could be of help in any way. Mr. Warren asked the master to contact the Coast Guard and the Vessel Traffic Service to report the fire on board the *Manhattan* and the *Manhattan's* location.

Mr. Warren then called the company security office and informed the security officer that there was a fire on board the *Manhattan* and requested him to contact the local police and emergency medical service to have police and EMS personnel waiting at the Port Imperial Ferry Terminal.

Completing this telephone call, Mr. Warren heard over the radio that the *George Washington* had successfully recovered the passengers and crew from the *Manhattan*. Mr. Warren contacted the master of the *George Washington* and cautioned him to get a passenger count to make sure that they had all of the passengers. Mr. Warren said that he wanted to make absolutely sure that no one was being left behind. Mr. Warren directed the master of the *George Washington* to bring the vessel to Port Imperial Ferry Terminal where two ambulances were waiting. He asked the master if anyone was seriously injured, and was told there were no serious injuries reported.

At this time, there were seven company ferries that had responded to the Manhattan on scene, as well as Coast Guard and New York City Fire Department vessels. Mr. Warren became concerned about the traffic congestion and instructed his vessel masters to leave the scene as soon as they received clearance from the Coast Guard and the fire department to do so. He requested the master of the ferry *Yogi Berra* to remain on scene with the *Manhattan*. [The master of the *Yogi Berra* was Capt. Kevin Busselmeier.]

About 1930, the *George Washington* arrived at the Port Imperial Ferry Terminal where two ambulances and three police officers were waiting. The EMS personnel from the ambulances examined and treated the passengers from the ambulance and asked if any of them wanted to be transported to the hospital. Two passengers, one

complaining of breathing difficulties and the other suffering from asthma told the EMS personnel that they would like to go to the hospital.

Mr. Warren took the crew from the *Manhattan* to his office and informed them that they had to be taken to the hospital for post-accident drug/alcohol testing. While in Mr. Warren's office, the master of the *Manhattan* was interviewed over the telephone by Coast Guard Activities New York concerning the fire on board the vessel. At about 2000, the three crewmen left the terminal and were transported by ambulance to Palisades General Hospital where another marine operations manager, Mr. Mike McPhilips, met them on arrival. At about 2115, the master and crew of the *Manhattan* underwent breathalyzer tests for alcohol and submitted blood samples for drug screening. According to Mr. Warren, the tests conducted by the hospital were not strictly in accordance with the DOT testing requirements, so the following morning, the crew of the *Manhattan* were again tested by urine sample by the company's drug testing program contractor.

Meanwhile, the NYFD vessel on scene pushed the *Manhattan* alongside New York Pier 42 where fire department assets extinguished the fire. Later that night, after Coast Guard inspectors had verified the structural integrity of the vessel, the New York Waterways ferry *John Stevens* towed the *Manhattan* to the Port Imperial Ferry Terminal in Weehawken, New Jersey. The *Manhattan* arrived at the terminal around midnight and was safely moored to the dock.

END OF INTERVIEW

Donald J. Tyrrell
Investigator-in-Charge